

# Ames Historical Society

AMES • IOWA

## Newsletter to Members 2015 SPRING....ISSUE #2/4

*Discovering our history,  
Preserving our past,  
Sharing our stories.*



### Ames Historical Society Board:

<b>Co-President</b>	Mary Atherly
<b>Co-President</b>	Kathy Svec
<b>Co-Secretary</b>	Lynette Spicer
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The Board meets the 2nd Thursday of each month 6:45pm at 416 Douglas. Members welcome!

### Staff:

<b>Executive Director</b>	Casie Vance
<b>Projects Coordinator</b>	Alex Fejfar
<b>Collections/Volunteer Coordinator</b>	Hannah Frederick

### Emeritus Staff:

Alan Spohnheimer, Margaret Vance,  
Dennis Wendell

Ames Historical Society is an incorporated, 501c3 not-for-profit organization whose mission is to engage our diverse public and provide unique opportunities to learn about Ames history.

**Headquarters:** 416 Douglas, Ames, IA 50010

Open Mon-Fri, 1-5pm, Sat 10am-4pm

Open Thursdays until 8pm through August

**Mail:** PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010

**Phone:** 515-232-2148

**E-mail:** info@ameshistory.org

**Website:** www.AmesHistory.org

**Facebook:** www.facebook.com/ameshistoricalsociety

The newsletter is published four times a year for AHS members. Direct comments and questions to: Editor, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010 or e-mail above. Editor: Kathy Svec

**Hoggatt School** is located on the grounds of Meeker School, near 18<sup>th</sup> and Burnett, Ames, Iowa. Due to construction at Meeker School, Hoggatt will be closed until spring 2016.

## PEOPLE OF OUR PARKS New Exhibit Explores Parks' Namesakes: On View Until September 30



Take a tour of Ames city parks at the newest exhibit at the Ames History Center! *People of Our Parks* tells the stories of the 16 parks named after Ames people.



Ever wonder about Inis Grove, Gartner, Kurtz, Daley, Teagarden, O'Neil? Now, is your chance to

learn about the noteworthy citizens who were honored with a park or who included parkland in their legacies. Once the exhibit tells its tales, pick up an Ames Parks & Recreation program book with maps to set out and explore all our parks this summer!



Learn about the history of the park system narrated by former Director, Nancy Carroll at a video booth (left) and take a virtual 360° tour of all 16 parks on the digital stereoscope (right).

The exhibit was designed and installed by Casie Vance, Alex Fejfar, Margaret Vance and Hannah Frederick and recognition also goes to

volunteers Justin Skarin for the woodburned sign, panel frames and oversized materials and Virginia Griesheimer for the handpainted wildflowers. The trees were gleaned from Margaret's farm.

The exhibit will be on display through Wednesday, September 30, but don't put off making plans to see it!



## 2015 Lecture Series Continues...

All lectures will be at Ames City Auditorium, 520 Sixth Street, Ames, Iowa. NOTE Tuesday – Thursday schedule. A \$3 freewill donation is requested at the door to assist with auditorium rental.



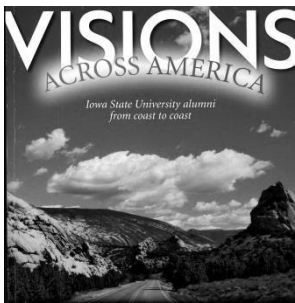
**Thursday, May 28, 7pm:**

### **The 1940s: Iowa State and a World at War**

by Douglas Biggs, Associate Professor of History, University of Nebraska-Kearney

The decade of the 1940s changed the United States and transformed the world. Not surprisingly, these years also saw Iowa State College undergo a metamorphosis with military training on campus and war-related research. Since the 1890s, ISC had been nationally known for agriculture and veterinary science, but the crisis of war accentuated Iowa State's transition

to a nationally known college of science, engineering and technology that joined agriculture as the flagship programs of the institution. Biggs will talk about the war years and their long-term effects on Ames, both on and off campus.



**Tuesday, June 16, 7pm** (note date change; not June 30):

### **Just Passing Through: Noteworthy Iowa State Graduates**

By Carole Gieseke and Jim Heemstra, ISU Alumni Association

As a college town, Ames has been a short-term home to many thousands of students who came here to live while earning a degree. Hear remarkable stories of some of our more recent temporary residents from the ISU Alumni Association's Carole Gieseke and Jim Heemstra. They traveled to all 50 states to interview and photograph Iowa State graduates for a special publication and exhibit called "Visions Across America." A display of 20 of Jim's extraordinary

photographs will accompany the presentation.

**The Lecture Series is open to the public.**

Sponsored in part by Olde Main Brewing Company

## More Events – Mark Your Calendars!

### **At the Ames History Center, 416 Douglas:**

- Fri. - Sat., May 29-30, 10am-5pm, **Annual Book Sale** – many titles, wide array of subjects
- Open Houses: **ArtWalk** Fri., June 5, 5-9pm featuring paintings and drawings by Virginia Griesheimer; **MusicWalk** Thurs., Sept. 3; Octagon **Art Festival** Sun., Sept. 27
- Wed., June 10, 1-5pm, activity for Iowa **Museum Week Open House**
- Sat., June 13, 12-3pm, Community **Ice Cream Social**
- Save The Date! – **Annual Benefit**, Saturday, August 29 – Historical Trivia Night!
- Thu., Oct. 15, 7-8:30pm, **Members After Hours** - opening of a new exhibit
- Fri., Nov. 13, 5-8pm, **35th Anniversary Bash**

### **Visit the History Trailer at the Farmers Markets!**

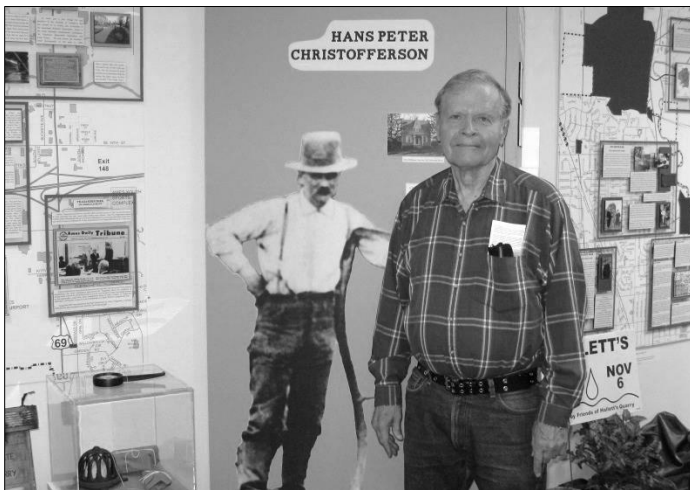
Main Street Farmers Market – last Saturday of the month:

- May 30 - The Dinkey
- June 27 - Now & Then
- July 25 - Bicycles
- August 29 - Living in the Past
- September 26 - Old Fashioned Games
- October 31 - Skunk River Finds

North Grand Farmers Market – Saturdays:

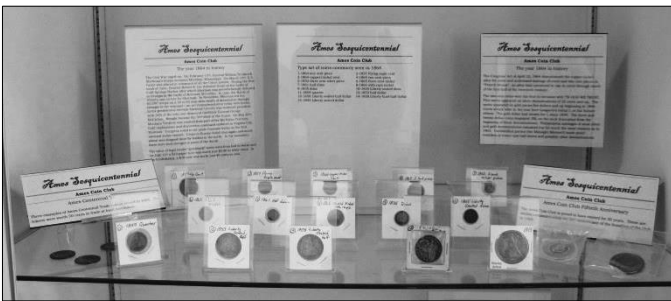
- July 11 - The Dinkey
- September 12 - TBA





### Christofferson Visits

Floyd W. Christofferson, grandson of the namesake of Christofferson Park in southwest Ames, was a charming visitor to the April 16 Members Night and opening of the *People of Our Parks* exhibit. He was happy to relate stories about his family. Hans Peter Christofferson came to Story County in the 1880s, moving in 1891 to the farm south of Ames where the farmhouse still stands. Floyd W. and his wife Anna moved back to the home place in 1971. As the neighborhood on Oakwood Road began to grow, the City felt there was need for a park in the area but they didn't own land in that part of town. The Christoffersons wanted to keep a buffer between their place and the new housing going up, so they sold a piece of their land to the City at a discount for the purpose of developing a park. It was dedicated in September 2000.



### Coin Club Collaboration

The Society was very pleased to join with the Ames Coin Club to display a special exhibit during the Sesquicentennial. It highlighted rare coins from 1864 in celebration of their 50-year anniversary and the Ames 150. The Coin Club was founded in 1964 and includes 50 members who collect paper money, coins, tokens, medals and counterfeits. They host regular meetings, educational programs, auctions and sponsor the Coin-O-Rama held in February.

### We Get Mail!

#### Website Rationing Page

This email arrived from Anita Larson, Duluth, MN: "I am a high school history teacher at a private school. I am writing to tell you how much I like and use your web site on rationing during World War II. I stumbled upon it several years ago and my first reaction was Wow! This is fantastic. I am going to use this in my classroom. And I do. I developed a worksheet that I still use with my students every year."

What I really like about the web site, beyond all the primary sources, is that it really helps people who did not live through rationing understand how it worked. For years I had students ask me questions, such as, "Where did someone go to get their stamps?" or "How did you know what stamp to use for what?" This web site brings all of that to life in a very engaging way. Thank you for such a valuable resource. I am very appreciative of your work and thought you should know that it reaches beyond Iowa."

#### Mural Farewell

The beautiful 2003 Ames Historic Mural, located at Main Street and Burnett, will be removed due to needed repairs to the wall on which it is painted. A farewell event was held on May 2 to honor the artists and the important place the mural has had in the Ames community.



An email note came in from mural artist, Jane Graham: "Thank you so much for organizing the Farewell to the Ames Historical Mural. I was

happy to see so many supporters come to say their good byes!"

Kathy Svec told the story of the building, Jane (left) related the history of the mural and artist Ursula Ruedenberg (right) added comments about growing up in Ames. (That's Ursula's father, Klaus, in the center.) Musician Alan Spohnhemier accompanied "Auld Lang Syne" on his trombone. A print of the mural will reside in the Society's collection.



## Society News – Around the Ames History Center



### Ames 150 Events Recognized

In April, the 2014 events of the Ames 150 celebration were recognized by the State Historical Society of Iowa during its 2015 “Excellence in History” awards. The SHSI presents five categories of awards each year and Ames 150 received a certificate of recognition for the Loren Horton Community History Award that recognizes “the best project that increases awareness and participation in Iowa history at a local level.”

Five members of the Ames 150 steering committee, including Society Executive Director, Casie Vance (3<sup>rd</sup> left), accepted the recognition during a presentation at the State Capitol with Gov. Branstad (right). Co-Chair Jim Black (2<sup>nd</sup> left) said, “We just had people coming out of the woodwork to help in many different ways. It was a fitting 150th birthday present for the city of Ames.”

### Young History Detectives

On April 7 and 9, Kathy Svec (3<sup>rd</sup> left) presented the “Mystery Suitcase” program to two groups of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade home schooled children. The youngsters reviewed the suitcase’s contents and looked for clues about the owner. Ames Community School District liaison, Judy Kemp, wrote this note: “I want to thank you again for a great presentation. It is always nice when something goes even better than expected! I was pleased at how engaged both groups were. The format was really effective. I love that the students now know

there is a center in Ames where such history can be explored further!”

The suitcase program is one of many on local history that can be requested by groups in Ames.



See our website for the complete listing of programs.

### Telling Theater Tales

During the talk about Ames theater mogul, Joe Gerbrach at the Annual Meeting on March 7, Chuck Benson of Ames, was delighted to see a picture of his younger brother, Warren (right), who was featured in an article headlined, “Showing of Fall Styles”.

Long-time Ames resident, Mary Kerns, was also present and related this story: One year, lawns and green spaces in Ames were over-run with dandelions. Kids were told that if they dug the pest plants, they would get a free movie ticket for every bushel they brought in! Kids quickly learned to trade the weeds when they were fresh and filled the basket, rather than waiting until wilted and took up less room. Mary reported that many bushels of dandelions were turned in and that it really made a difference the next year!

This memory was also shared: some kids became squeamish about going to The Capitol because it had a rodent problem, but for every mouse or rat that was brought to the ticket booth, a refund would be offered! We’d be pleased to receive other theater stories!



MAN ABOUT TOWN — Warren Benson, 728 Sixth St., looks like he's waiting for his date to show up. He's all ready to do the town in a sharp sports outfit from Bledsoe's. (Tribune Photo).

### Proud to be from Ames!

We received this thank you note from John Sylvester, Minneapolis: “Enclosed please find my 2015 membership donation. I am so proud of having been born and raised in Ames and of being a member of the outstanding class of 1957! Your newsletter is top-notch and I look forward to every issue. It is my loss that I live so far away from all of the events I read about in your newsletter. I appreciate and devour each article on Ames history. Keep up the Great Work!” (Thanks!)

### Free Newsletter Bundles

The Society has accumulated a number of past issues of the newsletter – more than are needed for our records. They have been bundled and are available for free to anyone who would like them. The newsletters have always contained at least one local history story and these past issues are a treasure trove of information. Stop in during open hours or call 515-232-2148. Offer good as long as supplies last.





# Society News – Around the Ames History Center

## News Briefs

**SAVE THE DATE:** the Society's Annual Benefit will be held Saturday evening, August 29. Plan to join us for an entertaining Historical Trivia Night!

**LOBBY EXHIBIT:** *Skunk River Findings* explores locally-found artifacts in our collection including buffalo and horse skulls, arrowheads and stone axes.

**STAFF CHANGES:** Collections Manager Sarah Carlson has left our organization to expand her hours at the Iowa Jewish Historical Society in Waukee. She will be replaced by Hannah Frederick, who will become full-time at the end of August to manage collections and serve as volunteer coordinator.

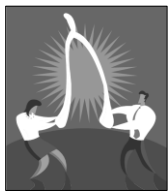
**WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS:** New to the Society's Board are Shannon Bardole and Hank Zaletel. Both Shannon and Hank bring an intense interest in history and a commitment to helping us meet our mission. We are pleased to have them! We sincerely thank departing Board members, Phyllis Heffron and Mike Quinn for their dedication and service.

**BOOK SALE DONATIONS:** The Society is accepting book donations during regular hours through May 27 for our sale on May 29 & 30. Donors may drop items at 416 Douglas. (No outdated textbooks, please.)

**HOW TO DONATE ARTIFACTS:** Residents interested in contributing Ames artifacts or archives to our collection are asked to first give us a call or drop us an email. We can let you know if the items you have will fit our collections guidelines and if so, set a time for drop-off. 515-232-2148, [info@ameshistory.org](mailto:info@ameshistory.org).

**HOGGATT SCHOOL:** The schoolhouse will be closed until spring 2016 due to construction at Meeker School.

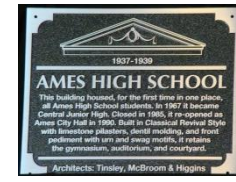
## Society Wish List:



We are grateful to Julie Brockert and a matching donation from the Arthur J. Gallagher Foundation that allowed us to purchase a pop-up tent and a 6-month subscription to newspaperarchive.com. Thank you! Still needed:

- Donations to an acquisitions fund to purchase Ames-related artifacts (many show up on eBay)
- Donations to upgrade our website
- Compact-VHS to VHS converter
- Funding for a regular student internship position
- Ongoing subscription to newspaperarchive.com (6 months - \$99.95)

Contact us at 515-232-2148 or [info@ameshistory.org](mailto:info@ameshistory.org)



## Marking 25 Noteworthy Years!

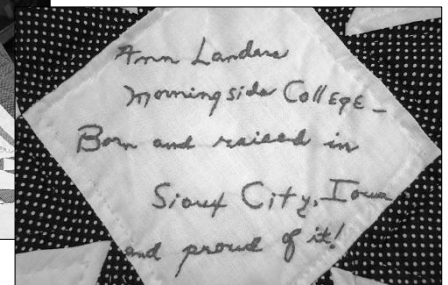
A short ceremony on April 28 commemorated the 25 years since the former Ames High School became Ames City Hall. Current Mayor Ann Campbell (above) and former Mayor Ted Tedesco spoke about the civic pride generated by repurposing the handsome structure. The Society's Casie Vance gave a short history of the building, and Sharon Wirth and Roberta Vann of the Ames Historic Preservation Commission unveiled the historical plaque that will be placed outside the building. A handsomely decorated cake (above) made the occasion festive. The plaque is one of many that will be placed on historic buildings in the downtown area.

## New Addition to Our Collection

In May, Karen Skold Tow returned to Ames to donate a unique Ames artifact. A quilt made by Ames women composed of signatures of noteworthy Iowans was stitched for the American Bicentennial and raffled off. Karen's mother, Ellen Skold, won the raffle. Ellen recently passed away, and Karen thought the quilt should come "home" to Ames. Among famous locals such as wrestler Dan Gable and the Ames Manhattan



Project's Frank Spedding, were actor John Wayne, music man Meredith Wilson, pollster George Gallup and columnist Ann Landers (below).

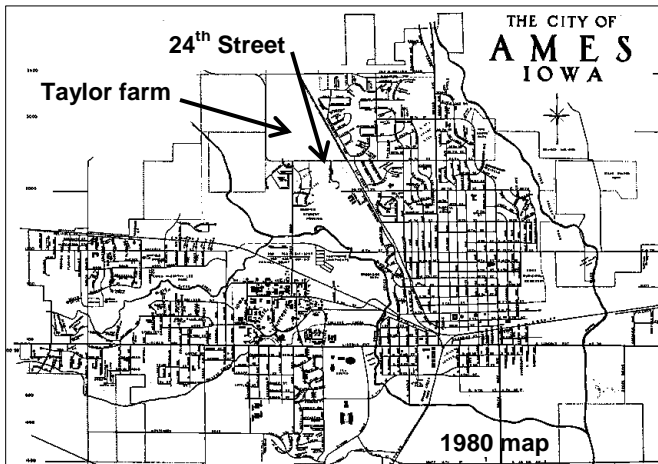


## Local Stories in Ames History

### The Past One Hundred Years on 24th Street

*Written in 1977 by Mildred Dodds Taylor, age 80*

Many changes have taken place on 24th Street during the past 100 years. Until it was named 24th Street a few years ago, it was just "the road to town." Having lived on the farm at 24th and Stange Road since I was 9 years old [1906], I have seen many of these changes.



Ames was laid out in 1864, so it was only 4 years old in 1868 when my grandfather Obidiah Allen, came from Michigan with his family. He located on a farm that was then 3 miles from town and 1.5 miles north of Iowa Agricultural College.

He established that farm and the following generations maintained and improved it. My grandfather was a Lincoln Republican and kept well informed on the issues of the day. He lived on the farm until his death in 1899.

A narrow gauge railroad was built from Des Moines to Ames and north in 1874. Its arrival changed the Allen location because Obidiah could not see the trains from where they lived. This he did not like. In 1881, he built a new home and barn on a higher spot where he could watch the trains. At that time [passenger trains went north and south twice each day] as did many freights hauling grain, coal and supplies. It was a busy railroad. [When the C&NW bought it, 1884, it was upgraded to standard gauge and is still an active Union Pacific line.]

All the years I was growing up, the entire area was farms. From Grand Avenue west to Hoover on the north side of 24th Street and north to Top-O-Hollow Road was the Walter Grove farm, later occupied by the Speck family. Today this entire farm is covered by [North Grand Mall], a drug store, eating places, a bank drive-in, a filling station, realtors' offices and other business, three churches and many, many homes.

The McClure farm on the south side of 24th is now covered with duplexes, apartments, Gertrude Fellows School, Ames High School, Northcrest and a church.

Clem O'Neil, [co-founder of O'Neil's Dairy] lived in Mrs. McClure's home and walked across the fields to college. He graduated about 1912 and then his brother, Henry, came to live with her and walked to college.

West to Stange Road on the south side of 24th Street was the Sam Kooser dairy farm. It was a large Jersey dairy farm, with two houses, large barn, milk house and other buildings. Mr. Kooser delivered milk to homes downtown in a mule-drawn delivery wagon - the only door to door milk delivery for many years. This land is now covered with Iowa State student housing

On the north side of 24th street, west of Hoover was the Walter Morris farm, later occupied by his son, Edward and his wife, Neva. [Neva lived in the large white farm house (below) just north of the water tower until she was 95 and upon her death in 2010, she had the distinction of being the oldest Iowan, and second oldest person in the world at age 114 years, 246 days.]



The neighborhood then extended to the Roland family at Grand and 20<sup>th</sup>, the Gunder family on 20<sup>th</sup>, and two or three families living along Grand Ave. and a family at 13th and Grand. These all were farms.

We met once a month in these homes and there was always a program and food. In the summer time we had picnics in the present Homewood Golf Course timber area, then part of the Ed Gunder farm. We always had a big July 4th picnic in the Gunder woods and later gathered in the Walter Morris yard for fireworks set off by our fathers. No TV, no radio, no movies, no bicycles.

By the 1920s, each family had one car and about that time we got electric lights in our homes. By then electricity came as far north as Grand and 20<sup>th</sup>. The neighbors built a line along 24<sup>th</sup> and south to 20<sup>th</sup> and we all had electric lights in our homes. My family had lights from an acetylene plant in our basement until my father got careless one day and it blew up!

I can't remember when the telephone came to us. I do remember that for many years the entire neighborhood was on the same line. Each family had a certain ring and the line had an emergency ring.

The early roads were mud, deep mud. No gravel. I am sure not even in my grandfather's day they had gravel for the roads. My father worked out his poll tax by keeping the roads level with a wooden drag pulled by 4 horses to keep the deep ruts smoothed down. [In the early 1970s,] 24<sup>th</sup> Street was paved.

Kids learned to stay at home and entertain themselves. After school we had work to do, bring in coal, wood and cobs, carry out the ashes, gather the eggs, the boys helped milk the cows. No track, football, or basketball or outside activities to stay for after school.

Stange Road was built in 1915 with prison labor from Anamosa. Two large tents were down on what is now the college golf course. There were several men with a ball and chain on their legs and guards carried shotguns.

Until they built Stange Road to go to the college, we had to go west, open a gate, go in across the side of a field through the Moore farm [now Northridge], through another gate, through the timber, across a Squaw Creek Bridge, up a hill and through another gate about where 13th Street meets Stange Road. The huge big stone now on the ISU Science Building lawn was at the top of the hill beside the gate.

In my mother's day the mail was delivered by a man on horseback and not every day. Later the rural mail delivery was brought by a man driving a horse and buggy. [In 1977], Ames had 4 rural routes, the mail delivered by car.

Down on the south bank of Squaw Creek was the dumping ground for the college and everybody else. It was called the "Glory Hole." We often saw smoke coming from that area because tramps camped there.

Peddlers came to the door during the summer with an open type wagon and horse. They had brooms, tin cups, yard goods, lace, bandana handkerchiefs, about everything to sew with and small household needs. History tells us that is the way Younkers Store in Des Moines started - the owners having been country peddlers.

In 1976, my son, Bob, and I were recognized for owning a "Century" Farm, having been in the same family for over 100 years.

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*Mildred Dodds Taylor died in 1990 at age 93. The farm was sold by her children, Bob Taylor and Mary Taylor Carter in 1994. It has now been developed as the "village style" Sommerset Neighborhood.*

## History News Around Town

### Brick Sidewalks

In April, 500 bricks from an 80-foot section of old sidewalk at the northeast corner of Sixth & Carroll were salvaged by an AHS crew with permission from the City.



In 1905, brick sidewalks were ordered for seven downtown streets, but only two

fragments remain that we know of: on west 5<sup>th</sup> Street west of Pyle Office Park and on Kellogg between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets. Around 1909, an ordinance was written to specify that future sidewalks would be concrete. Above left: before demolition. Above right, staffer Alex Fejfar stacking bricks for removal.

### Goodbye Meeker School

On May 2, an open house was held at Meeker Elementary School (1950-2015) for anyone who wanted one last look before it is torn down. The School District is building a new, updated structure on the south side of the same site that will be finished this fall. The open house was a day of nostalgia for many Ames residents!

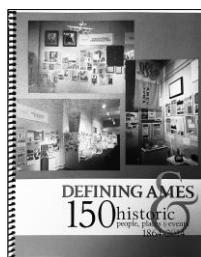


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## Museum Shop



**DEFINING AMES: Second Edition**  
all the text from the Sesqui exhibit – just \$10!

**DVD SET:** all 6 of the Sesqui exhibit  
Gallery Talks – set \$50; each \$15

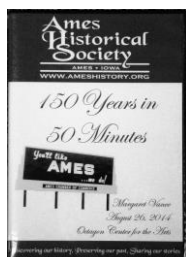
**POSTER & MAGNET:** the Ames 150 papercut  
by Linda Emmerson, 16"x20" poster, black or maroon,  
\$15; magnet \$3

**NEW: AHS LOGO BOOK BAG:** canvas, \$15

**PLUS:** 16 oz. Onondaga Blend coffee,  
Images of America: AMES by Betcher & Biggs;  
all of Farwell Brown's books on Ames, three different  
Ames walking tour guides and more...

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Open Mon-Fri 1-5pm, Thu. 'til 8pm, Sat 10am-4pm or by apt.



## Open Thursday Nights!

The Ames History Center will be open until 8 pm on Thursday evenings through August 27, making it convenient to include on a trip to Bandshell concerts or to Main Street stores that are also open Thursdays.

## ArtWalk Open House June 5

ArtWalk is always a festive evening in the Main Street Cultural District and the Society will join in, featuring the paintings and drawings of Virginia Griesheimer, Ames. The event goes from 5-9pm, Fri., June 5.

## Is it time to renew your membership?

Renewals are due on the one-year anniversary of last year's payment. Check this newsletter's label for information about your membership. Memberships fund the day-to-day operations of the Society, allowing us to continue to be a valued community resource. We thank you!

<b>Introductory - 1st year</b>	<b>\$15</b>	<b>Partner</b>	<b>\$250</b>
<b>Basic</b>	<b>\$30</b>	<b>Benefactor</b>	<b>\$500</b>
<b>Friend</b>	<b>\$50</b>	<b>Patron</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>
<b>Sustaining</b>	<b>\$100</b>		

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Ames Historical Society, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010**